

# Ask

# SHIP



LOCAL HELP FOR PEOPLE WITH MEDICARE

July, 2011

Sarah Reimmuth

**Q: A SHIP counselor recently helped me understand my mother's Medicare Advantage plan and how to get Extra Help paying for her prescriptions. I would love to help others with this too. Does SHIP have any volunteer opportunities? Do I have to know a lot about Medicare?**

**A:** SHIP offers a variety of volunteer opportunities throughout the state of Indiana. SHIP's well-trained volunteers provide one-on-one assistance, counseling by telephone, and public information through various community events. Volunteers are the key to the program's success.

SHIP currently has 340 volunteers throughout Indiana! There are 132 local sites offering SHIP counseling and 58 sponsoring agencies (partnering organizations).

You do not need to know a lot about Medicare to volunteer as a SHIP counselor because SHIP provides all of the tools and training you will need to get started.

SHIP volunteers are called to answer questions regarding Original Medicare, Medicare Advantage, Medicare supplements, Medicaid, employer benefit plans, long-

term care, paying for prescriptions and more.

SHIP Counselors are the Medicare expert for their local community. They do not sell any kind of insurance products and must be impartial. Counseling can include an analysis of insurance needs, side-by-side policy comparisons, help with filing claims, and appeals or filling out applications for assistance.

After extensive training, volunteers can do both phone and site counseling. Volunteer counselors duties include, but are not limited to:

- Answering questions related to Medicare, Medicare supplemental insurance, Medicare Advantage plans, long term care insurance, help with prescription costs, and low-income assistance.
- Making client contacts through face-to-face appointments, local telephone calls, 800 telephone calls, presentations, and other local activities.
- Completing a Client Assessment Form on each contact.
- Attending semi-annual training events and keep current on update

information provided by the State Office.

SHIP volunteers must fulfill the following criteria:

- Complete a 30-hour basic training which includes using a computer
- Complete hands-on volunteer shadowing
- Want to help people with Medicare in his/her community
- Attend regular local in-service training sessions (usually two half-day sessions per year)
- NOT be affiliated with (i.e., employed by, or in a position to sell) any insurance product, agency, company or service
- Make a minimum one-year commitment
- Be willing to assure complete confidentiality to every client
- Complete required paperwork
- Enjoy meeting new people and helping others
- Like to have fun

If you think you might be interested in helping others by becoming a SHIP volunteer or if you or someone you know needs help with Medicare related issues, call SHIP for help at 1-800-452-4800, TTY 1-866-846-0139 or online at [www.medicare.in.gov](http://www.medicare.in.gov).

SHIP is a free, unbiased counseling program provided by the Indiana State Department of Insurance. To schedule an appointment with SHIP, call 1-800-452-4800, TTY 1-866-846-0139 or visit [www.Medicare.IN.gov](http://www.Medicare.IN.gov) to find your local site.